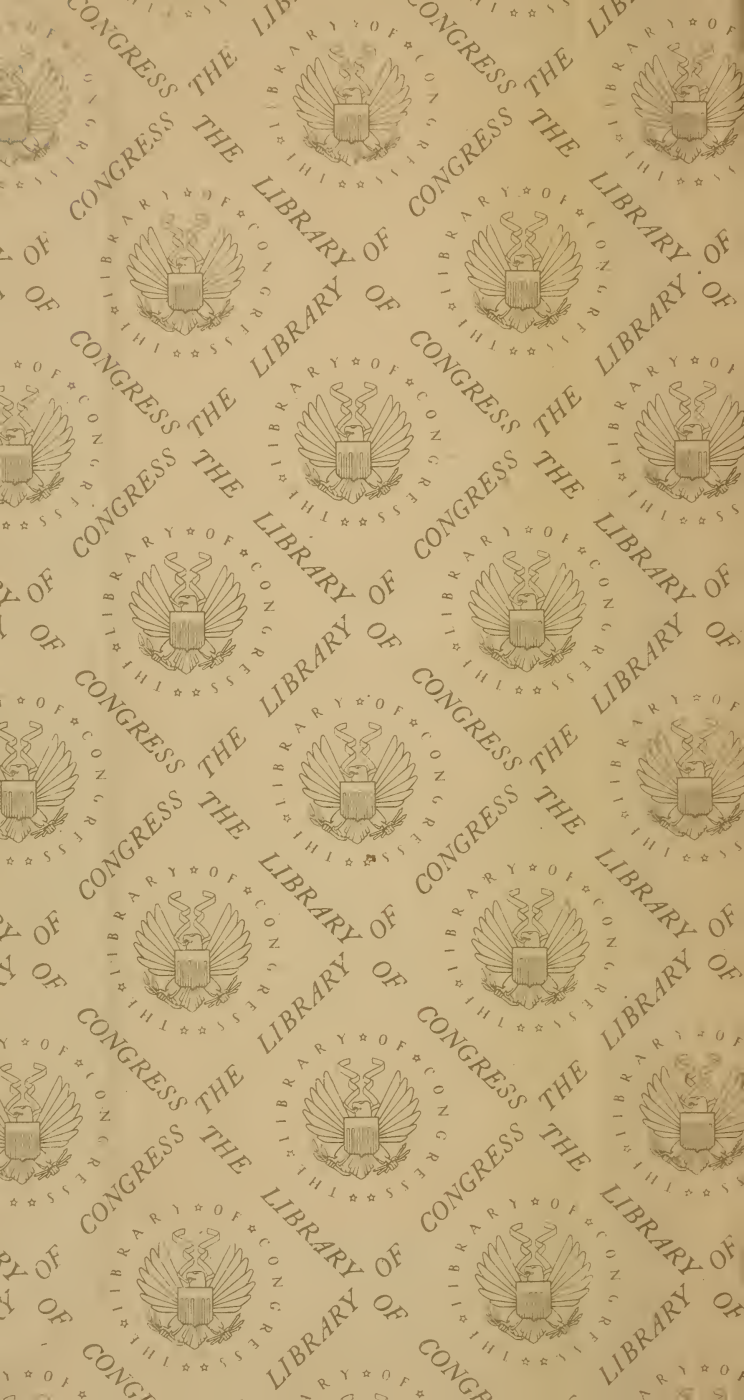
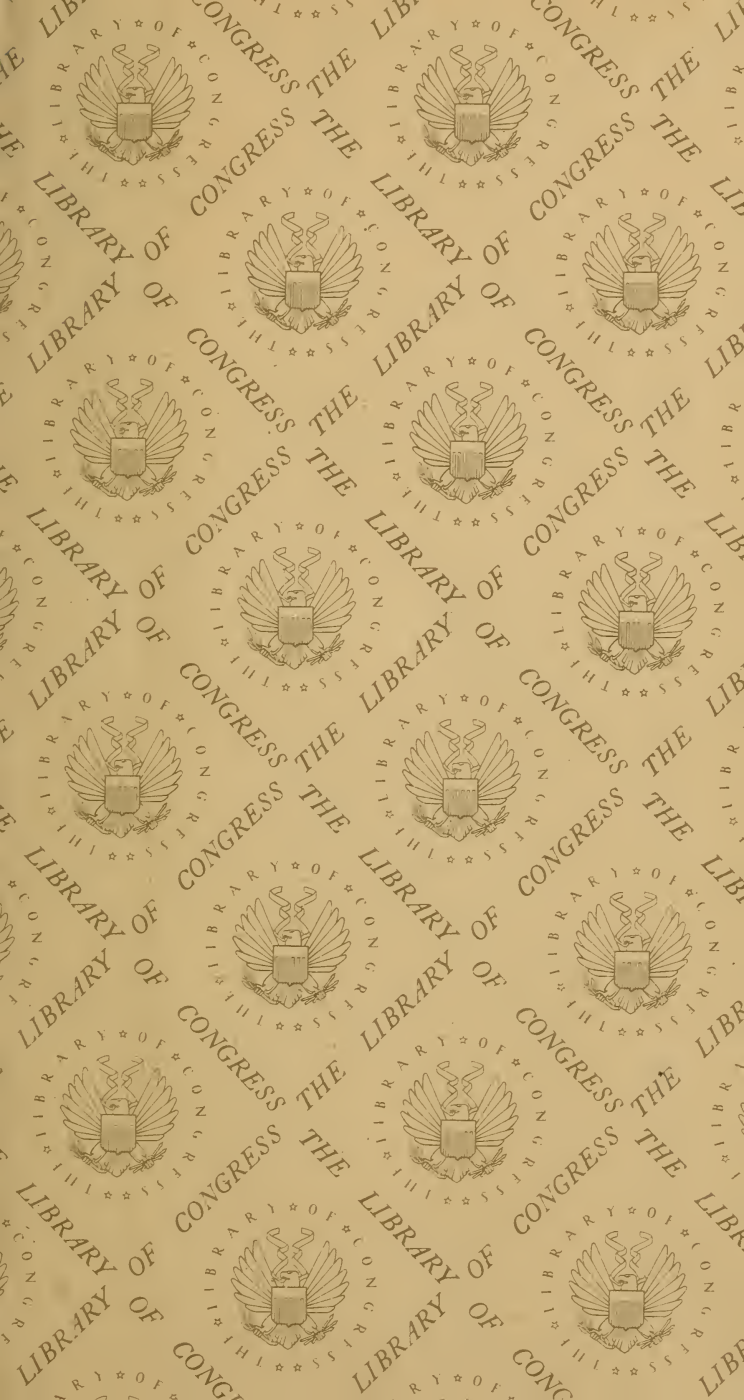


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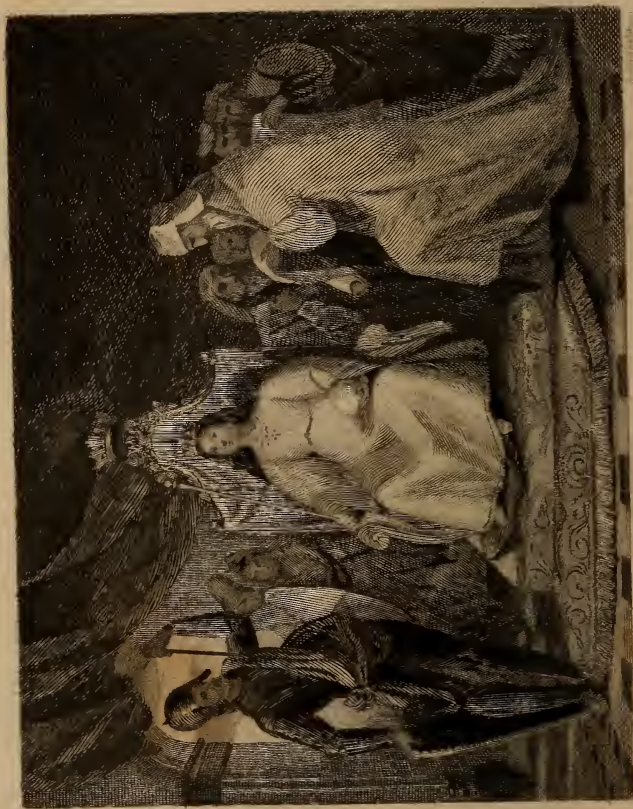
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THE  
HISTORY OF JOSIAH,  

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THE YOUNG  
KING OF JUDAH.

*Romas  
of  
Gallaudet*  
BY REV. T. H. GALLAUDET,

LATE PRINCIPAL OF THE AMERICAN ASYLUM FOR THE  
EDUCATION OF THE DEAF AND DUMB.

*283*  

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PUBLISHED BY

THE AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

150 NASSAU-STREET, NEW-YORK.

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D. Fanshaw, Printer.



## CONTENTS.

Page.

CHAP. I. The history of Josiah an interesting one.—What is a monarch.—A description of a republican government, and of a monarchical one.—What a king was among the Jews, 9

CHAP. II. How and when Josiah came to the throne.—His father Amon.—The ceremonies attending his becoming king.—Happiness does not depend on living in splendor and luxury.—How riches and power should be used.—What Josiah was doing while yet a boy.—His early religious instruction. 20

CHAP. III. What Josiah did when he was sixteen years old.—His strong faith in God, in resolving to reform his people.—The wickedness of Judah at that time.—Manasseh's idolatry.—Account of Moloch and other false gods.—Manasseh's punishment and repentance.—Amon's great wicked-

ness.—Extent of Josiah's kingdom.—His anxiety to do his duty,

32

CHAP. IV. Josiah's beginning to remove idolatry.—Account of the high places.—Josiah had them destroyed, and also the altars and images of the false gods.—Account of Baal.—Why Josiah strewed the dust of the images upon the graves of the idolaters, and burned the bones of the priests upon the altars.—What he did in the cities of Israel to destroy idolatry.—Example of Josiah in overcoming difficulties.—His strong detestation of wickedness.—His great resolution in doing his duty.—His undertaking to repair the temple.—Some account of the injuries it had received, and of its being profaned,

43

CHAP. V. How Josiah raised money to repair the temple, and began the work.—What we have to do to build up a spiritual temple to the Lord.—What children and youth can do.—No account kept with the overseers.—Value of a good character.—Principles of honesty.—The book of the law of the Lord found.—Account of the ark of the



covenant.—The book of the law carried to Josiah and read before him.—The judgments it denounced against sin.—Josiah's distress.—The great evil and danger of sin, and the need of trusting in Christ, 54

CHAP. VI. The book of the law found, probably the original copy.—Why hid in the temple.—Value of the Bible.—Josiah sends to inquire the will of God.—The messengers go to Huldah the prophetess and bring back her answer.—Terrible threatenings against sin.—Josiah resolved to endeavor to bring back his people to obedience to God.—He orders a great meeting at Jerusalem, at which he and his people enter into covenant with God.—How such covenants ought to be made.—He resolves to destroy all the remains of idolatry in his kingdom, and enters upon the work.—Why he went to Bethel.—Jeroboam's setting up a golden calf at Bethel, and what happened at the time.—A remarkable prophecy about Josiah,

68

CHAP. VII. The prophecy fulfilled.—God has all things under his control.—Other things

that Josiah did to destroy idolatry—burned the groves—defiled Tophet—burned the chariots of the sun, and beat down the altars and the images ; great and difficult things to be done by so young a monarch.—What is *moral courage*, and importance of it.—Josiah's keeping the passover, and an account of it.—Duty of obeying strictly what God commands with regard to the ordinances and institutions of his worship.—Why Josiah was spared the sight of the great troubles that were to come on Jerusalem and Judah,

81

CHAP. VIII. Josiah goes out with his army to meet the king of Egypt.—He is mortally wounded in the battle and carried to Jerusalem.—His death.—His character.—Conclusion.

94



THE  
HISTORY OF JOSIAH.

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CHAPTER I.

The history of Josiah an interesting one.—What is a monarch —A description of a republican government, and of a monarchical one.—What a king was among the Jews.

In this book I lay before my youthful reader the history of Josiah, one of the kings of Judah. He was himself *a youth* ; indeed, he was only eight years of age when he began to reign, which happened about six hundred and forty years before the birth of Christ. As he grew older, he showed that he truly loved God, and wished to obey his commands. He endeavored also to make his people love and obey God, and thus become virtuous and happy. Many interesting and instructive things occurred during his reign.

This history was written, as all the histories in the Bible were, that we might be made wiser and better by reading them. God himself di-

rected good men how to write them ; so that it is the same thing as if he should speak from heaven and tell us these histories, and, indeed, all the other things which are contained in the Bible.

Think of this, my young friends, and remember, while you are reading the history of Josiah, that it is taken from the Word of God ; that *it is all true* ; and that God has given it to you, not merely to entertain you, but to teach you to understand what a great and wise, what a just and holy, what a kind and merciful being he is. He desires, in this way, to lead you to love him with all your heart, and to do what he requires of you ; especially, *that you should do all the good that you can to your fellow-men.*

Josiah endeavored thus to love God, and to do good to others ; and it is *the example of his piety and benevolence* which I wish to hold up before you for your imitation.

You will not, indeed, be a king or a queen ; and wear a crown, and sit on a throne ; and have great wealth and power, and govern a

great many people, as young Josiah did. But you can *remember your Creator in the days of your youth*, as he did ; and fear to sin against God ; and hate all kinds of wickedness ; and endeavor to do all that God requires of you. And, as you grow older, and have *a right* to command others in any way, or the means of *leading them* to do their duty, you can strive, as Josiah did, to make all around you forsake their sins, and love and obey God.

In endeavoring thus to imitate the excellent example of Josiah, remember that you cannot do it in your own strength. We are, all of us, poor, ignorant, weak, helpless and sinful beings. We must always look to God to aid us in all our endeavors to love and obey him, and to do good to our fellow-men. We must pray for his Holy Spirit, thus to aid us, and *to work in us both to will and to do ; to lead us to think right, to feel right, and to act right*. Pray to God, my young friend, for the Holy Spirit. Pray for it, *from your heart*. Pray for it *earnestly*. Pray for it *frequently*. God has promised to give his Holy Spirit to those who do thus pray

for it. May he give it to *you*, that you may indeed get much good from reading this history of Josiah, and that you may be led to imitate the piety and benevolence of this youthful monarch.

What is a monarch, or king? We have no such rulers in this country. Our laws are made, and the people governed in quite a different way. As you grow older, you must learn all about the kind of government which we have; and do all that you can to keep it what it is, and to have all the people love, and respect, and preserve it for thousands of years to come.

In our country, the people choose, from time to time, and *from among themselves*, such persons as they think the wisest and best, to make the laws; to punish thieves, robbers, murderers, and other wicked people; to keep good order; and to have certain things done that all may be more comfortable and happy. If the persons thus chosen do not do right as rulers and law-makers, the people can take all their power away from them, and choose other per-



sons in their stead ; and they can do this, at certain times, year after year, as often as they wish.

This kind of government is called *a republican government*.

The government of a king, or, what means the same thing, *a monarchical government*, is quite different from this.

If the king is, at first, chosen by the people, (which is very seldom, indeed, the case,) they cannot choose another person to be king, if they do not like the first one. He continues to be king all his life-time, and when he dies, his eldest son is king after him ; and then again, *his* eldest son, and so on. If the king has no son, then, in some countries, when he dies, his eldest daughter is queen ; and, in other countries, some other near relation.

Many kings, in former times, had great power. They governed the people as they pleased. They made all the laws. They did what they chose, both with the lives and the property of the people, who were called *their subjects*. They obliged their subjects to give them a great

deal of money ; so that they were immensely rich. They obliged a great many of their subjects to become soldiers ; so that they had very large armies under their command, and were immensely powerful.

Some kings, at the present day, have also very great power. Others have not so much ; but the people choose some persons, who, together with the king, make the laws, and carry on the government.

Among the Jews, the kings had considerable power, but they could not do just as they pleased. God himself gave the Jewish nation all their important laws ; and the king, as well as the people, was bound to obey the laws. There were a great many *priests*, too, appointed by God, who conducted the public worship, and preached to the people, and explained the laws, and were officers and judges. If they saw the king attempting to break any of the laws, or to go beyond them in using his power, they had a right to let the people know this, and that the king was doing wrong, and that it was not their duty to obey him.

There were many *prophets*, also, whom God chose, at different times, to tell things that would happen, and to declare to the people what it was their duty to do. Both kings and people respected and feared these prophets, because they knew that they were sent to them by God himself. These prophets often reproved the kings for their wickedness, and threatened them with the displeasure of God, and with his judgments, if they did not repent ; and often directed them what to do, or what not to do. It was a very wicked and obstinate king who dared to treat the prophets ill, or disobey the messages which they brought from God.

Still, a king among the Jews had considerable power. He had great riches. He had a large army under his command. He could himself declare war against any nation, or make peace with them. It was his duty to see that all the laws were obeyed ; and he had the right to punish those who did not obey them. He could pardon the guilty, or he could sentence them to immediate death. If he was a good king, he was greatly beloved and honored by

the people. Every body treated him with great respect and reverence.

Sometimes the wicked kings did not regard the laws, nor the priests, nor the prophets. They wished to have all the power, and to do just as they pleased. And sometimes the people were very wicked also, and let the kings do as they pleased, and obeyed all their wicked commands. But, sooner or later, the terrible judgments of God came upon them, and both king and people were severely punished.

The kings had a very splendid dress. *The robe* which they wore cost a great deal. It was made of fine linen or cotton, and was of a purple color. On their head they wore a fillet, or ribbon, two inches broad. It was bound round the head, and tied behind. It was called *a diadem*, and glittered all over with pearls and gems. They wore this at all times, and also costly chains for the neck, and bracelets for the arms. In the English Bible, this diadem is called a *crown*. Other *crowns* were also worn by the kings, but it is not known how they were made.

*The throne*, on which the king sat, was a



high seat with a back and arms. Solomon's was made wholly of gold and ivory. It was so high that a footstool was needed for the feet to rest upon. *The sceptre*, which the king held in his hand, as one of the marks of his authority and power, was a wooden rod or staff, as long as the height of a man. It was overlaid with gold, or adorned with golden rings, and on the upper end of it was an ornamental ball of gold, silver, or ivory.

*The palaces* in which the kings lived, were very magnificent. They had large gardens, in which were beautiful walks, and groves, and fountains. Their tables were spread with a great abundance of the choicest food, and they had a variety of the richest and most splendid garments, to wear at different times. Their horses were noble and handsome animals, and their chariots very costly and elegant. Many persons always attended them, ready to get any thing which they needed, or to do any thing which they directed to be done.

The king was treated with very great respect. If any one neglected to do this, and had thus

given offence to the king, he was liable to be punished with death. Those who came into his presence, no matter how rich or powerful they were,—all his greatest generals, and judges, and officers, were obliged to make the customary obeisance. It was usual to do this, by bowing quite down to the floor, or ground. They all stood up in his presence. No one ventured to sit down.

When the king took a journey to any distant place, he was accompanied by numerous guards. A messenger was also sent before him, to tell the people that he was coming, that every thing might be made ready for his approach. Sometimes hills were dug down, and hollow places filled up, that his journey might be rendered easy and pleasant. He had, also, many officers around him to assist him in various ways ;—some to give him advice when he needed it ; others to do his writing,—to provide for his table,—to take care of his palace,—to accompany him as a guard,—to put to death those whom the king had sentenced to be executed,—and to carry information, respecting his commands, throughout the kingdom.

I might tell you of other things, my young friend, to show you the wealth, and splendor, and power of the Jewish monarchs. But I suppose you are a little impatient to have the particular history of Josiah begin. Well, I will not detain you from it much longer. What I have told you, however, will enable you to form a better idea of the very high station in which God placed the young Josiah,—of the difficult duties which, as he grew older, he would have to perform,—of the various temptations to which he would be exposed, and of the strength of his love to God and desire to obey his commands, which he afterwards manifested. If a young king thus situated was a bright example of piety and benevolence, how earnestly you should strive to imitate the example,—you, who are exposed to so much fewer temptations, and who have so many things to aid and encourage you to love and obey God, and to do good to your fellow-men.

## CHAPTER II.

How and when Josiah came to the throne.—His father's death.—The ceremonies attending his becoming king.—Happiness does not depend on living in splendor and luxury.—How riches and power should be used.—What Josiah was doing while yet a boy.—His early religious instruction.

Josiah came to the throne very unexpectedly. His father Amon was only twenty-two years of age when he became king, at which time Josiah was six years old. It seemed, therefore, probable that it might be a considerable time before Amon would die, and his son reign in his stead. But Amon, who was a very wicked king, after reigning only two years, came to a sudden and violent death. His servants hated him so much, on account of something which he had done to them, that they agreed secretly among themselves to kill him, which they did in his own house. These servants were, in their turn all slain by the people of Judah, who immediately made young Josiah king.



He was but eight years of age when this happened, and must have wondered not a little at all that was done to him, if he was treated as other persons were among the Jews, when they first entered upon the office of a king.

It is altogether probable, that Josiah, surrounded with soldiers, was conducted into the temple, and there anointed by the high priest with the sacred oil. This was poured upon his head, and ran down his garments to his feet. It had a very delicious smell, and was used by the Jews to show that the persons on whom it was poured were set apart from all other persons, and dedicated to God, in some particular service. It showed that Josiah was now no longer a common person, like other men and women, or boys and girls in Judah, but that he was distinguished from them, and dedicated, by this religious ceremony, to the service of God, as king of Judah.

In fact he was now a king, and the long sceptre was put into his hands, and the splendid diadem upon his head, to show that he was acknowledged by all as their rightful monarch.

It was customary, in the next place, for the kings to make a very solemn promise that they would rule in the way that God had directed, and according to his laws. As Josiah was so young, it is most probable that the officers of the government who were to have the care of him till he should be old enough to act as king, made this promise. It was proper that they should do so, so that they were really to have the authority; though what they would do, would be done as if Josiah had told them to do it, or, what means the same thing, *they would act in his name.*

Then, all the great men promised obedience on their part; and to show their attachment and respect to the young king, they bowed down, and kissed either his knees or feet.

He then left the temple and was conducted to his palace, attended by all the great men of the kingdom, by the soldiers, and by an immense crowd of people, who kept shouting,—“Long live the king,—Long live the king.” Various kinds of music on instruments, and joyful singing, filled the air, and sacrifices were offered up.

At last Josiah was seated upon his magnificent throne, wearing the splendid purple robe and glittering diadem, and holding the sceptre in his hand ; while the officers, the priests, the judges, the generals, and all the great men of the kingdom came forward to show him their respect and homage, and to tell him how glad they were that he had become their king.

What do you think were the feelings of this young boy while they thus made him their king ? I think he must have been greatly surprised at many things, though he probably understood a little of what it all meant. His mother Jedidah, and some of the persons who had the care of him, I dare say, endeavored to explain to him, beforehand, what would be said and done, and thus prepare him for it. I have no doubt he conducted with great propriety through the whole of the ceremony, though he must have been very much fatigued by the time it was all over.

Do you think that Josiah was greatly pleased with his new and splendid dress, and that he felt happy at the prospect of being a rich and

powerful king? Would you like to become a king; and wear the robe and diadem; and hold the sceptre in your hand; and be seated on a throne; and have all the people rejoice that you had begun to reign over them?

Would you like to live in a splendid palace, and have abundance of rich clothing and delicious food; to ride in a handsome coach, with fine and elegant horses; to be waited upon by a great many attendants, ready to get or do any thing that you might desire; to have a great deal of money with which to procure all that this world can afford; and wherever you went, to be treated, by every body, with great attention and respect?

Perhaps you imagine that all this would make you very happy. It might do so, for a little while. But soon you would think, how much easier your old cap or hat was than the glittering diadem; and that you had rather have a wooden bat in your hand, to play at ball with, than to carry the sceptre, with its ornaments of gold. You would sigh after your former pleasant companions and youthful sports; and the



luxurious food on gold and silver dishes would not taste half as sweet as the plain and wholesome fare to which you are now accustomed.

No, my young friend, I will tell you what will make you more happy than to be a king or queen. A neat and comfortable dress; a simple and temperate manner of living; a giving up of all luxury and splendor; a freedom from show and ceremony; innocent amusements, that are always at hand and cost nothing, such as healthful and smiling boys and girls delight in; a little circle of endeared friends; entertaining and instructive books; abundance of useful employments; delight in the beautiful and sublime objects of nature; *an ardent piety towards God; an active benevolence towards your fellow-men*; an affectionate faith in Jesus Christ; an imitation of his blessed example; a good hope, through his grace, of being prepared to die; a conscience that does not reproach you; a calm and joyful anticipation of the holiness and happiness of heaven;—these are pleasures which will last, and grow brighter as long as you live. All other pleasures—those which wealth and

honor, the dwellings of the great, and the palaces of kings, promise to give—are deceitful. They are accompanied with sorrow and pain ; with care and disappointment. They grow more and more tasteless, and end in dissatisfaction and disgust. What is worse than all, they lead those who continue to follow after them as their chief good, to love this world entirely ; to make no preparation for death ; and to go, at last, to stand before the judgment-seat of God, there to meet his just and terrible displeasure.

Envy not, my young friend, the rich, the great, the powerful. Be contented with such things as you have. Love and obey God. Try all you can, to make others good and happy. Then you will be happy yourselves, whatever your condition may be. Should God hereafter give you wealth or power, let them not cause you to be vain or proud. Still keep to a simple manner of living. Avoid luxury, splendor, and show. Use your riches and your power, so as to do the most good with them to your fellow-men. Remember that you will, at last, have to give a strict account to God, for the use which

you make of them. By thus using your riches and power in doing good, they will be less dangerous to your real happiness. The temptations which attend them, will lose their force. The numerous cares which they usually bring with them, will be diminished? And, in addition to this, you will do still further good to others, by your example of moderation, temperance, and humility; while so many, in similar situations, are ruined by indulgence, excess, and pride.

I have just told you, that riches and power bring with them a great many cares. Josiah must have found this to be the case, as he grew older and began to understand all that he would have to do, in order to be a good king and perform his duties faithfully. While he was quite young, to be sure, he had no care of his palace, and gardens, and horses, and chariots. Some of the officers of the government attended to all these things. Neither was called upon to do any kind of business in the way of commanding the soldiers, or governing the people, or keeping the kingdom in order.

A young boy, such as Josiah was, had not sufficient knowledge to be able to take the charge of these important and difficult matters. They were attended to by older and wiser persons, until he should be old enough to attend to them himself.

In the meanwhile, suitable persons were giving him such instructions as would prepare him, in the course of a few years, to act for himself, as the king of a great and powerful people. I think his mother, Jedidah, must have been a good woman, who loved and obeyed God, and endeavored to lead Josiah to do so likewise. Both his grandfather and father had been very wicked kings. The people, too, had become very wicked. There must have been a great many temptations continually around him, to draw him into sin. If he had yielded to these temptations, and followed the example of his grandfather and father, and afterwards repented and loved and served God, I think the Bible would have told us of it. But it does not. It says: "Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign; and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years. And



he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father, and turned neither to the right hand nor to the left ;"—that is, he kept on straight forward in doing his duty, without yielding to temptation.

Now if this was his character, I think he must have had religious instruction very early, and been kept from evil companions, and from doing wicked things. He must early have been taught his duty to God and to his fellow-men. And some one must have taught him how to pray, and also have prayed with him. Unless these things had been done by somebody, it is not at all probable that he would have acted as you will see he did, when he became older.

Now who was so likely to give him this religious instruction, and to take this watchful care over him, as his own mother ? Doubtless others assisted her. But it is the mother, after all, who can do the most, (if she will try to do it, and look to God for his blessing,) to lead her children early to *remember their Creator*, and to do what he requires of them.

Happy Josiah ! if indeed he had such a pious mother. It was worth more to him than his crown and sceptre, than all his wealth and power. It may have been *the very means* which God used to guard him against following the examples of his grandfather and father, and to lead him in the paths of piety and peace ; and thus *to save his soul*. And to save the soul is worth more than all the riches, and power, and kingdoms of the whole world.

Happy children, who have pious mothers ! Is *yours* such, my young friend ? It is worth more to you than you can imagine, to have such a mother. When you grow older, you will understand better how much it is worth. You will look back, and sigh and weep, as you think, with sorrow, of the many times in which you disregarded her kind advice and warnings, and disobeyed her commands. Do not prepare such reproaches of conscience for your own breast, and such keen sufferings for the breast of your tender mother. Listen to her instructions. Follow her example. Give your heart to that kind Savior, to whose arms she would lead you ; and

then you will best repay all the anxious care and toil which she has undergone in your behalf.

The Bible does not give us any account of what Josiah did, from the time that he began to reign, till he was sixteen years of age. During this period of eight years, he was, doubtless, making progress in useful knowledge, under the most experienced teachers. He was studying the history of his own country, and all the laws which God had given the Jews, from time to time, to direct both kings and people. He was becoming more and more acquainted with the duties of a king, and with the officers of the government, and the manner in which they did their business. He was thinking often of what things he would do, when he began to exercise his power, that he might cause the laws of God to be obeyed, and thus make his people prosperous and happy.

## CHAPTER III.

What Josiah did when he was sixteen years old.—His strong faith in God, in resolving to reform his people.—The wickedness of Judah at that time.—Manasseh's idolatry.—Account of Moloch and other false gods.—Manasseh's punishment and repentance.—Amon's great wickedness.—Extent of Josiah's kingdom.—His anxiety to do his duty.

In the eighth year of Josiah's reign, or when he was sixteen years old, the Bible tells us that "he began to seek after the God of David his father."

We cannot conclude, from this manner of speaking, that Josiah had not felt, before this time, any true love to God, and desire to obey his commands.

David commanded all the princes of Israel to help Solomon his son in building the temple of the Lord, and said to them ; "Set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God." It will not follow from this, that none of these princes had any true piety before.

Ezra, a very pious man, and a high priest



among the Jews, when he returned from Babylon with many of his countrymen, who had been with himself in captivity there, to their own city, Jerusalem,—“had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it.” He had doubtless often sought the Lord before that time.

We read of Hezekiah, one of the kings of Judah, that “in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered.”

I am inclined to think, therefore, that when it is said, “Josiah began to seek after the God of David his father,” it means that, at that time, he began with great earnestness to pray, and to inquire in what way he could best serve God among his people, and be a good king, as David his ancestor had been. We do not know certainly, that he was a pious youth before that time. But neither is it certain that he was not. His excellent character, as soon as we have any particulars about it; his great devotedness to the service of God; his determination and boldness in putting down idolatry, and

other kinds of wickedness ; together with his showing these marks of piety, in a very striking and decided manner, as soon as he began to act at all as a king, and while he was yet but a young man ;—all seem to make it most probable that he was pious at a very early age.

When he began, at sixteen years of age, to think very seriously about what he would have to do, as a good and faithful king, he must have felt not a little troubled at the difficult task which was before him. He looked round, and saw the great wickedness of his people, and was almost discouraged at the thought of attempting to reform them. He must have had a strong faith in God, and prayed to him most earnestly, and relied on his aid, to have dared, young as he was, to come out boldly against the idolatry, and other kinds of sin, which prevailed so extensively among his people, and to put them down with a strong hand.

The wickedness of the inhabitants of Judah had been increasing and spreading throughout the kingdom for many years. Manasseh, the grandfather of Josiah, worshiped the idols of

the neighboring heathen nations, and, by his example, led his people to do the same. He set up altars to a false god, called Baal, and planted groves, in which other false gods were worshiped. He even built altars for the worship of the sun, moon, and stars, in the courts of the temple of the Lord. He made his son pass through a great fire, in honor of Moloch, a horrible false god of the Ammonites. How wicked Manasseh must have been, to dare to worship this dreadful idol !

Sometimes, men, women, and children were sacrificed to Moloch. The old Jewish writers tell us that the idol was made of brass, and seated on a brazen throne. It had the head of a calf, and its arms were stretched out, as if ready to embrace some one. When children were offered to the idol, it was heated very hot by a fire made inside of it. Then the poor little boy or girl was put within its arms, where it was soon consumed by the violence of the heat ;—and that the cries of the miserable sufferer might not be heard, they made a great noise with drums and other instruments.

Oh ! how thankful you should be to God, my young friends, that you were born in a land where the true God is known, and where the Bible has such an influence, that nobody dares to be so foolish and wicked as to worship any idols ! But there are still many poor, ignorant heathen who worship idols, and offer up their children, too, to false gods. Will you not pray, and *do something*, that the Bible and pious missionaries may be sent to them, to teach them better ?

Manasseh also set up an idol in the very temple of the Lord, and worshiped it there. It was a female and called Astarte, or Astaroth, and was worshiped among a great many of the heathen nations. What an insult this was to the God of the Jews, the peculiar friend and protector of that people ! He had told David and Solomon, (the latter of whom built the temple,) that there, and in the city of Jerusalem, he would cause himself to be known in a very striking manner, while all the other nations and people of the world were ignorant of him. He had promised, too, that so long as the Jews did



according to all that he had commanded them, he would watch over them and keep their temple, and city, and country in safety.

In addition to all this wickedness, Manasseh shed a great deal of innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem with it, from one end of the city to another. He killed in a very cruel manner many good persons who opposed his idolatrous practices, and would not imitate his dreadful example. It is thought by some, that he put the prophet Isaiah to death, by ordering him to be sawn asunder.

This wicked king led his people to do as he did, and to become so very wicked, that the Bible says, "Manasseh made Judah and Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel."

God punished Manasseh very severely for his conduct. After he had reigned twenty-two years, he was taken prisoner by the king of Assyria, and bound in chains, and carried to Babylon, the great city where that king lived. The name of the king was Esarhaddon. While a



prisoner, and in bonds, at Babylon, he thought of his sins. He humbled himself before God. He repented, and besought God to deliver him.

God heard him. Esarhaddon gave Manasseh his liberty, and he returned to Jerusalem. His conduct showed that his repentance was sincere. "He took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the Lord, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the Lord, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city. And he repaired the altar of the Lord, and sacrificed thereon peace-offerings and thank-offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the Lord God of Israel."

God was pleased with this repentance of Manasseh, and blessed him with a long and prosperous reign—longer than any of the kings of Judah reigned, either before or after him. He became king when he was twelve years of age, and he reigned fifty-five years.

But, notwithstanding the repentance of Manasseh, and his command that all the people should serve the true God, his example, during the first part of his reign, must have had a very

bad effect. The inhabitants throughout all the kingdom had seen their monarch putting up idols, and bowing down before them. A great many of them, most of them, indeed—had joined in these practices. They had become accustomed to this idolatrous worship, and to all kinds of wickedness. Although Manasseh repented, and some of his people also, it is probable that a great many others did not. The whole nation was in a sad state. Many were secretly idolaters in their hearts, and were prepared, as soon as another opportunity should be given them, to return to their late abominable wickedness.

Such an opportunity at length occurred. On the death of Manasseh, Amon, his son, became king. He was twenty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years. That time, though short, was long enough for him to do much evil by his wicked example. We read in the Bible, that “Amon did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, as did Manasseh his father: for Amon sacrificed unto all the carved images which Manasseh his father had made, and served them; and humbled

not himself before the Lord, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself: but Amon trespassed more and more."

It seems that Manasseh, although he cast the strange gods, the idols, and their altars out of the city, did not entirely destroy them. Amon either restored most, if not all of them, to their former places, or had others made of a similar kind. He was a wicked and daring idolater, in spite of the punishment that had been inflicted on his father. He must have seen by this, how greatly God was displeased with an idolatrous and wicked king, and that, if he was such an one, he ought to fear that a severe punishment would overtake him also. It did overtake him, as you have seen, in a sudden and violent death.

During the two years of Amon's reign, the people of Judah, as we have reason to believe, again became as wicked as they had been in the first part of Manasseh's reign. Their own evil passions, and the example of their king, both united to bring about this sad change. Josiah saw it, and I have given you a particular

account of it, that you may understand the better what great difficulties he had to meet, when he began to exercise the authority of a king. It was important to know something of the history of his grandfather and father, that you might thus have a more correct idea of his own.

It would be well for you, also, to examine the map of Canaan, and find the tribe of Judah on it, and also the tribe of Benjamin ; for these two made up *the kingdom of Judah*, while the other ten tribes made up *the kingdom of Israel*. You can read in the Bible, how these two kingdoms were separated from each other, and the reasons of it, at the commencement of the reign of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon.

You will see that Judah was much the largest of all the tribes, and that with the tribe of Benjamin, it made a very extensive territory. We may be able to form some idea of the number of inhabitants in the kingdom of Judah, by finding out how many soldiers there were ; for if the kings had very large armies, we may be sure that there were a great many people, and many times more than there were soldiers.



Abijah, a king who reigned over Judah, about three hundred years before Josiah, had an army of four hundred thousand men. Asa, his son, "had an army of men that bare targets and spears, out of Judah three hundred thousand, and out of Benjamin, that bare shields and drew bows, two hundred and eighty thousand : all these were mighty men of valor." This was a great army indeed, *five hundred and eighty thousand men*. Uzziah, who reigned one hundred and sixty years before Josiah, had an army of three hundred and seventy-five thousand men. We are not told how large an army Josiah had ; but the accounts of the armies of the kings that I have mentioned, show what a populous and powerful nation the kingdom of Judah was.

Over this great people young Josiah was called to reign ; and when we consider their wickedness as well as their numbers, we may well suppose, that, in view of what he had to do, he was filled with the deepest anxiety, and prayed earnestly to God for direction and support.



## CHAPTER IV.

Josiah's beginning to remove idolatry.—Account of the high places.—Josiah had them destroyed, and also the altars and images of the false gods.—Account of Baal.—Why Josiah strewed the dust of the images upon the graves of the idolaters, and burned the bones of the priests upon the altars.—What he did in the cities of Israel to destroy idolatry.—Example of Josiah in overcoming difficulties. His strong detestation of wickedness.—His undertaking to repair the temple.—Some account of the injuries it had received, and of its being profaned.

We are not told the exact time when Josiah took the government of the kingdom entirely into his own hand. It may have been when he was sixteen years of age, and began to inquire, as we have seen, in what way he could be a good and faithful king, as David had been. It is more probable, however, that it was in the twelfth year of his reign, or when he was twenty years of age. For, some time during that year, he began to do the first thing of which we read, that called for the exercise of his power as a king. He began to attempt the destruction of idolatry throughout his whole kingdom.

To do this effectually, was a very difficult undertaking. Relying on God, however, he set about it, with a determination to keep on in the work, even if it should take years for its accomplishment. He began to clear Jerusalem and Judah from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images.

We often read in the Old Testament, of places of worship, called *high places*, which were in use both before and after the building of the temple. They were on hills and mountains, and often surrounded with pleasant, shady groves. There was nothing sinful in itself, in worshiping in such places; good men sometimes did this. But among the heathen nations these high places were the spots where the idols were worshiped in a very wicked and abominable manner. To prevent the Israelites from imitating this wickedness, which they were often very much inclined to do, God forbade them to worship on such high places after the temple at Jerusalem should be erected; for it was there alone that sacrifices were to be offered up unto him. He commanded the Israelites

to destroy utterly all the places wherein the people of Canaan, whose land they were to possess, served their gods upon the high mountains, and upon the hills.

These commands of God were often disregarded, and, at times, idolatrous worship on the high places prevailed, to a very lamentable degree, among the Jews. Even some of their kings, who, in other respects, obeyed God, were very blamable in this. The people were unwilling to have all the high places destroyed, on some of which, in former times, the true God had been worshiped, and the kings had not courage enough to do it. Hezekiah was the first who dared to attempt it; but his son Manasseh built them up again; and now Josiah, in the spirit of his pious ancestor, undertook the same difficult task, and had the resolution and perseverance to accomplish it.

He also caused the altars of Baalim to be broken down; "and the images that were on high above them he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them, and

strewn it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them. And he burned the bones of the priests upon their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem."

I will endeavor, my young friend, to give you an explanation of these things which Josiah did, that you may understand what they were, and how much he had to do in accomplishing them.

*Baalim* means the images or statues of Baal; and Baal was the name of an idol worshiped by the people who lived in Phenicia and Tyre. The Israelites, at different times, worshiped this idol. In the book of Judges, the second chapter and the eleventh verse, you will see that they did so, and that they also worshiped Ashtaroath, the same idol which Manasseh set up in the temple of the Lord. You will find, too, in the sixth chapter of the book of Judges, at the twenty-fifth verse, how Gideon was commanded by God to throw down the altar of Baal that his father had, and to cut down the grove that was near it.

Ahab, one of the kings of Israel, married a



very wicked woman, whose name was Jezebel. She was a daughter of the king of the Zidonians, a nation who worshiped Baal. Ahab was led astray by his wife to worship this idol also. He built an altar to him, and made a grove near it. In the eighteenth chapter of the first book of Kings, you can read how Elijah reproved Ahab; and how the fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice on the altar which Elijah built to the true God, while the priests of Baal cried to him in vain to send down fire on his own altar; and how all these wicked priests were slain.

In other places, too, you can see how the Jews forsook the worship of God, and had priests, and altars, and groves for Baal. He seems to have been their favorite idol whenever they fell into idolatry.

The inhabitants of Babylon and Carthage also worshiped this idol. It is supposed that, at first, Baal was the same as the sun, and Astarte, the same as the moon; but that, afterwards, some of the people who worshiped Baal, meant by it the planet Jupiter, and that, by Astarte,



they meant the planet Venus. Those two planets they considered the source and giver of all good. Poor, ignorant idolaters, and wicked too ; for had not their wickedness led them astray and blinded their minds, they would have seen that the sun, moon, and stars could not be gods, but that they must have been created and preserved by the Maker of all things, the only living and true God.

In the worship of Baal, human sacrifices were offered up, and the most wicked and abominable things said and done. No wonder that good Josiah caused the altars of this horrible idol to be broken down, and his images and groves to be destroyed. But what is meant by his making dust of the images, and strewing it upon the graves of the persons who had sacrificed unto them ?

Among the laws which God commanded Moses to give the Israelites, there was one respecting the body of a dead person being touched by any other person or thing. Any one, or any thing, that touched it was declared to be *unclean* for seven days. And while unclean, such

persons or things must not be found in the place where divine service was held and the sacrifices offered up. Such persons, too, were forbidden to have intercourse with others, and they had to use certain ceremonies before they could be considered clean again. You can read an account of this, in the nineteenth chapter of Numbers.

By strewing the dust of the images upon *the graves* of those who had sacrificed unto them, Josiah meant to show the people what an unclean and abominable thing it was; something which deserved no other place than to be put with the dead and loathsome bodies of those who had worshiped these images,—and by being put there, to become unfit even to be touched by any one.

For the same reason, he burned the bones of the priests of Baal upon the altars of that false god. These bones would make any thing which they touched unclean, and thus the altars of the idol would become polluted, and rendered loathsome and detestable in the sight of the people.

After doing these things in his own kingdom, he went to the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, and Napthali, which you can find on the map, and did the same things there. These cities were in the kingdom of Israel, and it is probable that Josiah had authority over them given to him by the kings who had conquered that country. Most of the people of Israel, or the ten tribes, were now in captivity, and the few that remained were united with the subjects of Josiah, and put themselves under his protection. "And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem."

It took Josiah a considerable length of time to do all these things. He was engaged in the great work of reformation, in his own kingdom and that of Israel, during the space of six years. And we shall see, that even then it was not entirely accomplished. But he persevered till it was brought to an end, and showed how resolute and faithful he was in doing his duty.

When he began, he knew the difficulties that he must meet, and the labor that he must undergo. But this did not discourage him. For he knew, also, that the Lord was on his side, and that if he looked to him for guidance and support, he could endure any labor, and should overcome all difficulties.

Remember the example of Josiah, my young friends, whenever you see difficulties in the way of doing your duty. Be as desirous as he was, to obey all the commands of God. Have as strong a detestation as he had, of all kinds of wickedness. When it is in your power, as it was in his, to break up sinful practices, and when it is both your right and duty to do it, go forward and do it. When you grow up to be men and women, you may find yourselves having authority, not indeed, like Josiah, over a whole country, but yet over a considerable number of people. You may have the care of families, and of schools; or some of you may even be officers of the government, and have it made your duty to see that the laws against different kinds of wickedness are respected and obeyed.



Think, then, of the young king of Judah ; and, like him, *be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* Wicked persons may ridicule and oppose you. Even good persons may not stand by you, and sustain you, as they ought. But, still, *go forward and do your duty.* The Lord will be on your side, and whom should you fear ?

Having labored for six years in the arduous work of removing all kinds of idolatry from his city and kingdom, Josiah undertook another very important service : it was to repair the house of the Lord ; for now that he had made such progress in the destruction of idols throughout the land, he wished to restore the temple of the true God to a condition in some degree worthy of that great and holy Being to whom it was dedicated.

This magnificent building was erected by Solomon, and had stood about three hundred and thirty years. I shall not attempt a description of it, as it would occupy too much time to go through with all the particulars of what is known concerning it, and interrupt too much the his-



tory to which we are more especially attending. And any other than such a particular description would be of but little use. My youthful readers would do well, however, at some leisure time, to read an account of this beautiful and grand building, in one of the works on Biblical Antiquities to which they can have access.

Thirty-three years after this splendid edifice was erected, it was plundered by Shishak, king of Egypt. Rehoboam was, at that time, king of Judah. He and his people had fallen into gross idolatry and wickedness, and to punish them for this, God permitted the king of Egypt, with a very numerous army, to come up against Jerusalem. They entered the city, and took away all the rich and splendid things, and all the gold and silver, that were in the temple and in the palace of the king. This must have been a great loss, and very humbling to the Jews, as they considered the temple the glory of their city and nation.

After this, the temple was profaned at various times by having the worship of idols introduced into it. It was also pillaged and suffered

to fall into partial decay; and, although repaired by some of the kings of Judah, it presented, in Josiah's time, a most melancholy appearance, and awakened in the breast of that pious monarch a strong desire to restore it, so far as he was able, to its original beauty and splendor.

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## CHAPTER V.

How Josiah raised money to repair the temple, and began the work.—What we have to do, to build up a spiritual temple to the Lord.—What children and youth can do.—No account kept with the overseers.—Value of a good character.—Principles of honesty.—The book of the law of the Lord found.—Account of the ark of the covenant.—The book of the law carried to Josiah and read before him.—The judgments it denounced against sin.—Josiah's distress.—The great evil and danger of sin, and the need of trusting in Christ.

It seems that Jehoash, a former king of Judah, was also engaged in his time, in the work of repairing the temple, and that the following method was adopted to raise money for that purpose. A chest of wood was placed near the

altar, into which the priests put the contributions that they received from the people, and which were presented in great abundance. The chest was carried, every day to the king's office, by the priests, and opened there.

The money was then counted by the king's scribe and the high-priest, and put into bags ; and the chest was carried back again. With this money the workmen were paid ; and the overseers were so faithful and honest that no account was kept with them. The bags of gold and silver were put into their hands, and they took as much from them as they thought was justly due to themselves, and to those whom they employed.

It is quite probable that Josiah pursued a similar course, in collecting the contributions of his people for the repairs of the temple. After they were made, he sent three of the officers of his government to the temple. These officers were, Shaphan, the scribe to the house of the Lord ; Maaseiah, the governor of the city ; and Joah, the recorder. They were persons of great distinction. Shaphan did all the writing that re-

lated to the business of the temple. Maaseiah acted under the authority of the king, in keeping the city of Jerusalem in order. And Joah had the care of the records or books which contained an account of what was done, from time to time, in conducting the affairs of the kingdom.

These men were sent, by the king, to the temple, to see that the various repairs were carried on in a proper manner, and the workmen paid. They went with Hilkiah, the high-priest, to the room where the money which had been contributed was kept, that he might count it in their presence. The amount is not mentioned, but it must have been a very great sum. It was then brought out, and put into the hands of the overseers of the workmen, who were to take care of it, and pay it out to the men that were employed in the repairs of the temple.

You see from all this, my young friend, how earnestly the good king Josiah, and the officers of his government, and the priests, and the people were engaged in doing what was necessary for conducting the public worship of God, in



such a way as would honor him, and promote the cause of religion throughout their land. Some planned and directed ; others labored with their hands ; and the rest contributed money to the great work.

*We* have the same great work to accomplish ; not, indeed, to build or repair *a magnificent temple* in any one place, to which all the tribes of men may go up and worship the Lord. The time has long since come when, according to the prediction of our Savior while conversing with the woman of Samaria, the true worshipers of God need no more go up to Jerusalem to offer an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord, but may worship him *in any place*, if they do it in spirit and in truth. For “God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

But this true worship of God ; a supreme love to him in the heart ; a cheerful obedience to him in the life ; a cordial acceptance of his Son whom he has sent, to be the Savior of all who will trust in him ; and a faithful imitation of the example of this Savior, in doing good to



our fellow-men; *this true worship of God* needs to be revived and established in the hearts of Christians, and to be diffused among all who are yet ignorant of its nature, and have never enjoyed its blessings.

Did Josiah mourn over the idolatry and wickedness of his people, and endeavor to reform them? Did he deplore the profanation and ruins of the temple, and strive to render it a suitable place for the worship of the great and holy God? And ought not we to mourn over the vast amount of sin and wretchedness that exists in our own and in other lands, and do all that we can to remove it? Ought we not to strive, with our prayers, our money, and our influence, to extend the religion of the Gospel throughout the world? There is a sight before us even more melancholy than that of their magnificent Temple, going to decay and ruin, was to Josiah and his people. It is *man in ruins*; the noble powers of his mind, and the best affections of his heart, degraded and debased by sin; and his soul so polluted and vile, that it is no longer a fit residence for that Spirit of truth, and

grace, and peace, whose temple, like himself, must be pure and holy.

Had you lived when Josiah did, my young friend, do you think that you would have aided, in some way, to restore the decaying temple of the Lord, and make it once more the delight of your eyes and the glory and strength of the nation? And now to rescue a more magnificent temple from destruction; to save from ruin the souls of your fellow-men; to adorn them with spiritual grace and beauty; to build them up in the faith of the Gospel; to unite them into one brotherhood of peace and love; so that they may be “no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.”

There are many different ways in which you can aid in this great work—in erecting this vast spiritual building, *this holy temple in the Lord*. To do it, *the Gospel must be preached to every*

*creature.* Bibles, and missionaries, and Tracts must be sent to the destitute ; and the prayers of Christians must ascend for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon their own hearts and those of their fellow-men.

You can do something, young as you are, in building up this spiritual, holy temple, to the Lord. Will you do something? Will you do it *now*? Will you do it *heartily*? Will you *persevere* in this great and glorious work? Ask your parents, your friends, your Sabbath-school teacher, your pastor, what you can do. You will find there will be enough for you to do, if you are only willing to engage in the work.

The overseers of the workmen in repairing the temple, were selected from among the priests ; and it is particularly mentioned that they had skill in playing on instruments of music. This, perhaps, was a mark of their being *ingenious and skillful men*, who would see that the work was done in a nice and elegant manner. The money, as we have seen, was put into their hands with which to pay the workmen ; but they were known to be so faithful and honest, that no account was kept with them.

You see in this transaction, my young friend, the value of having a character for honest and upright dealing. Always strive to maintain such a character. Be scrupulously fair and correct in all your business, even in the smallest things. Take no advantage of others. If you are a seller, think how you would wish a seller to act towards you, in similar circumstances, *you being the buyer*. If you are a buyer, think how you would wish a buyer to act towards you in similar circumstances, *you being the seller*. And then act according to the golden rule, of *doing to others as you would have others do to you*. Be assured that such a course, besides the peace of conscience which it will afford you, will also contribute, in the highest degree, to your respectability in life, and to that amount of success in business which will be best for you. O ! if Christians would but adopt these few simple rules of dealing, how much more weight their example would have to lead others to embrace the religion of Jesus Christ.

While they were engaged in carrying out the money from the treasury-room, Hilkiyah, the



high-priest, found a book which had lain there for some time, either in a part of the wall or in a chest. He was surprised at seeing it, and still more so, when, after opening it, he found that it was "a book of the law of the Lord, given by Moses." It probably had been there a long time. Who put it there, in such a secret place, or for what reason, is not known. It probably was the *original*, or first book of the law given by God to the Israelites, and written by Moses himself. This book he commanded to be put in the side of *the ark of the covenant*, and kept there.

The ark of the covenant was kept in the Tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple, in that part of it called the Holy of Holies, a place so retired that the light of the sun never entered it. The ark was a box, made of a very beautiful kind of wood, called shittim-wood, of an oblong shape, like a trunk or chest. It was something more than two feet and a half broad and high, and a little more than three feet and a half in length. It was covered all over with the purest, brightest gold. There was a border of gold all



round its upper surface, and on each of the two sides, at equal distances from the top, were two gold rings, in which were placed the staves of gold by which the ark was carried.

At the two ends were two cherubims, with their faces turned towards each other, and their wings spread out over the top of the ark. There was nothing inside of the ark but the two tables of stone, on which the ten commandments were written. A quantity of manna was laid up beside the ark, in a vessel of gold, and also the rod of Aaron, and *the book of the law*.

It seems, that when this book of the law was found, the ark was not in the temple; for we read afterwards, how Josiah commanded the priests to restore it to its proper place, and not to carry it about any more. No doubt, he also ordered the book of the law again to be placed by the side of the ark, and both to be treated with all that care and respect which was due to them.

As soon as Hilkiash perceived what a valuable book he had found, he told Shaphan the scribe of it, and gave it to him to read. Having ex-

amined it some time, Shaphan went with it to the king. After telling Josiah that the money which they had found in the temple had been delivered to the overseers of the workmen, he showed him the book which he had received from Hilkiah, and read in it before the king.

Among other parts of this book of the law, it is very probable that Josiah listened with great attention and interest to the twenty-seventh, twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth, and thirtieth chapters of Deuteronomy. You will see, by reading these chapters, that they were peculiarly applicable to the state in which the kingdom of Judah was at that time. They contain the blessings which God promised to his people, if they would be faithful to him, and obey the laws which he had given them. They also contain the curse which he denounced against them, should they become disobedient. These curses were dreadful indeed ; and, as Josiah heard them read, his heart sank within him. He knew the great wickedness of his people, and he trembled lest the awful judgments of God should speedily overwhelm them.

Here was the very book in which God himself had directed Moses to write down his awful threatenings against the Israelites, if, at any time, they should forget his commandments, and fall into idolatry and other grievous sins.

It seemed as if God was present, uttering these terrible curses in his hearing, and showing Josiah what must soon be the sad condition of his offending subjects. He was in great distress of mind; and it was so great, that he tore the very garments which he had on, as it was customary for the Jews and other eastern nations to do, to show the excess of their grief.

It is no wonder that Josiah felt so. The displeasure of God against sin, and the manner in which he shows that displeasure towards those who continue to persevere in sin, are very great and dreadful.

“The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath are against all them that forsake him.”  
“God will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honor, and im-

mortality, eternal life ; but unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil."

The day is coming, "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

My dear young friend,—These threatenings are not idle words. They are the words of the great and holy God. They are addressed to *you*. Have you not been a *sinner* ; have you not thought, felt, said and done, a great many times, what you know to be wrong and contrary to the commands of God ? You know you have ; and you know that you still do not obey God in all the things which he requires of you ; that you do not love him with your whole heart, and soul, and strength, and mind, and others as yourself.



His laws, which you have so often broken, threaten you with *everlasting destruction* ! How can you escape this dreadful punishment ? only by sincere sorrow for all your sins, and a heart-felt trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Have you trusted in this Savior ? *Have you trusted in this Savior* ? Will you trust in him, and thus be delivered from *all the curses* which are written in *the book of the law of the Lord*, against the sinner who continues in sin, *hardened, obstinate, impenitent* !



## CHAPTER VI.

The book of the law found, probably the original copy.—Why hid in the temple.—Value of the Bible.—Josiah sends to inquire the will of God.—The messengers go to Huldah the prophetess, and bring back her answer.—Terrible threatenings against sin.—Josiah resolved to endeavor to bring back his people to obedience to God.—He orders a great meeting at Jerusalem, at which he and his people enter into covenant with God.—How such covenants ought to be made.—He resolves to destroy all the remains of idolatry in his kingdom, and enters upon the work.—Why he went to Bethel.—Jeroboam's setting up a golden calf at Bethel, and what happened at the time.—A remarkable prophecy about Josiah.

Josiah, as we have seen, was deeply affected at hearing the book of the law of the Lord read to him by Shaphan. Whether he had ever seen another complete copy of this book is doubtful. God had commanded the kings of the Israelites, each one with his own hand, "to write a copy of the law in a book, that it might be with him, and that he might read therein all the days of his life, and learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them." He had also commanded, that "at the

end of every seven years, when all the people were to come together, this law should be read in their hearing, that they might hear and learn, and fear the Lord their God, and observe to do all the words of the law."

It is not probable that either of these commands had been obeyed during Josiah's reign, or for a long time before. There were, among the priests, and perhaps to some extent among the people, abstracts from the book of the law, or certain parts of it written out, which served to direct them in their worship, and in the discharge of their duty. But the original copy which Hilkiah found, was probably the only entire one in existence. Who had put it away in the temple, is not known. Some one might have done it, to conceal it from those who would wish to destroy it, because it denounced such severe judgments against their idolatrous and wicked practices. Or it may have been hid even by some idolatrous and wicked person, who wished to have it out of sight, and yet did not dare to destroy it. At any rate, it was God himself who so directed events, by his over-

ruling providence, that it should be preserved from injury, and remain entire, both for the benefit of his people at that time, and of all future generations.

The preservation of the whole Bible, by the same providence of God, from the time when its different parts were written, down to the present day, is equally wonderful. It is one proof that the Bible is, indeed, the word of God; and it calls also, for our gratitude towards him for thus giving us the possession of what is of more value to us than every thing else which this world can afford.

Think, too, my young friends, how abundantly we can all be provided with the Sacred Scriptures. We do not have to copy the word of God as they did in Josiah's time, and as they were obliged to do, even a few hundred years ago, before the art of printing was known. Then the price of a Bible was very dear. It is said that in England, in 1274, it cost, with a commentary, as much as would amount to the work of a laboring man for fifteen years. Now we can buy a Bible for a very small sum of money, and

Those who are poor find no difficulty in getting it, if they will only ask for it, *without money and without price.*

Josiah was greatly afflicted at the dreadful curses which were denounced, in the law of God, against the wickedness of his people.

“And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Jahaziah a servant of the king’s, saying,—Go ye, inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found : for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.”

These persons, whom the king ordered to go, immediately set out to execute his commands. And where do you think they went *to inquire of the Lord*, to ascertain what the will of God was concerning Josiah and his people? They went to a very good and pious woman by the name of Huldah, the wife of Shallum, who



dwelt, at that time, in Jerusalem. She was a prophetess. God often, in some way which we do not understand, made known to her his will; and told her things that would happen; and directed her how to tell the people what he wished them to know as coming from him; and to instruct them in their duty.

After Huldah had heard the message from the king, this was her reply. I give it to you in the very words which she spoke, as they are recorded in the Bible, that you may remember what God says about those who break his laws, and that *you* may fear to sin against him.

“And she answered them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Tell ye the man that sent you to me, Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the curses that are written in the book, which they have read before the king of Judah. Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and shall not be



quenched. And as for the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the Lord, so shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, concerning the words which thou hast heard; Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes and weep before me, I have ever heard thee also, saith the Lord. Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eye see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same."

These were terrible threatenings against Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of Judah. They show the great displeasure of God against sin. God will indeed bring evil upon the wicked, who keep on in their wickedness, who do not repent of and forsake their sins. His wrath shall be poured out upon them, and shall not be quenched. He will bring upon them *all the curses* that are written in the book of his law.

Will you not be truly sorry, my dear young friend, for all the sins that *you* have committed against the just and holy God? Will you not humble yourself before him, and be tender-hearted, like Josiah, full of deep and penitent feeling, acknowledging that it would be right in God to *pour out his wrath upon you*, but beseeching him, for Christ's sake, to forgive you, and to have mercy upon you, as he had upon Josiah?

The messengers returned to the king from the prophetess Huldah, and told him what she had said. He immediately resolved to do all in his power to lead his people to see and feel their guilt, and to bring them back to a state of obedience to God. For this purpose he determined to have a great meeting of them at Jerusalem. He despatched messengers throughout his whole kingdom, commanding the priests, the Levites, and his subjects in general, to assemble immediately in that city. His orders were promptly obeyed; "and the king went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests and the Levites, and the people great and small: and he

read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the Lord."

It must have been a very solemn and sublime sight: a great and powerful king, himself quite a young man, surrounded by the ministers of religion, by the officers of his government, by the great and the wise, by the old and the young, by parents and children, holding the newly found book which contained the will of God, and declaring its affecting truths aloud in the holy and magnificent temple of the Most High, in the presence of that vast assembly. Wise and good monarch, thus to make thy power the means of giving glory to the King of kings, and of endeavoring to lead thy people to be loyal and obedient to the supreme majesty of heaven and earth! Happy indeed for their subjects and for all mankind, if the princes and rulers of the world would follow thy illustrious example.

Josiah, then, while yet standing in his place, made a covenant before the Lord, that is, he solemnly promised and engaged, calling upon God, in whose presence he stood, to witness the

sincerity of the act, "to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which were written in the book."

Influenced by his example, and following his direction, all the people also who were present agreed to be bound by the same covenant, and engaged, as their monarch did, to obey the commandments of the Lord. How many of them did this in a humble and sincere manner, feeling in their hearts what they expressed by their outward conduct, we know not, though there is reason to believe, from the great wickedness of the nation afterwards, that very many of them were entirely hypocritical in this whole affair, and this did but increase their guilt.

Should you ever, my young friend, be called upon to make a solemn promise, or covenant, in any important matter, and especially in uniting with any body of Christians, so as to belong to the same church to which they do, think well what you are about to do. Pray that you may do it understandingly, conscientiously, and sincerely,



with all proper solemnity, and with a deep feeling of your accountability to God. Beseech him to give you his Holy Spirit, that you may do it in this manner, and that you may receive strength from him to enable you faithfully to perform what you promise. A covenant of this kind is the most solemn and important transaction in which we can engage, and needs to be entered into with great deliberation and care. To be a hypocrite in doing it, that is to pretend to do it sincerely and seriously, while there are no right feelings in the heart, but all is outward appearance and show, is among the greatest sins. It is lying to our fellow-men. It is mocking God. It is insulting him with the profession of love and obedience, while the heart is still in rebellion against him. In thus acting, what reason there is to fear his just and terrible displeasure!

The great meeting in the temple being broken up, and the people on their way to their different homes, Josiah, knowing that there were still remains of idolatry in his kingdom, resolved once more to endeavor to destroy it entirely,



and to have nothing left that might serve as a temptation to lead the nation again to fall into it. He commanded Hilkiyah, the high-priest, and the other priests, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple all the vessels that had been used in idolatrous worship, and he burnt them a short distance from Jerusalem, and carried the ashes of them unto Bethel.

Bethel was a city about twelve miles north of Jerusalem. It occupied the place where Jacob was when he slept and had his remarkable dream. It was the place, too, where Jeroboam, a wicked king of Israel, set up a golden calf for his people to worship, about which I must tell you some things, that you may understand the reason why Josiah carried there the ashes of the vessels which he caused to be brought out of the temple and burned.

When ten of the tribes of Israel revolted against Rehoboam, the son and successor of Solomon, because they were so much dissatisfied with his government over them, they chose Jeroboam to be their king, and formed what was called the kingdom of Israel. Rehoboam continued to be king of Judah.

Jeroboam was fearful that his people, if they went up to Jerusalem to worship, as they and all the Israelites had been accustomed to do, might be enticed to go back again to Rehoboam, who lived at Jerusalem, the capital of his kingdom. So he took counsel with some of his leading men, who, like himself, were bad men, and did not fear God, and he resolved to make some idols, and set them up in the two extreme parts of his kingdom, and persuade the people to worship them, instead of going up to Jerusalem to sacrifice unto the Lord. The idols which he made were golden calves, and he set one up in Bethel, and the other in Dan, which was the town farthest north in his kingdom. He told the people that it was too much trouble for them to go up to Jerusalem, and that these calves were the gods which had protected and taken care of them, and which they might worship near at home, with much less time and inconvenience. He built houses, too, and appointed priests for these idols, and ordained a great feast or solemn day, where he and his people should offer their worship unto these false gods.

While Jeroboam was attending this feast at

Bethel, and sacrificing on the altar of the golden calf, and burning incense before it, with great pomp and ceremony in the presence of his people, a man of God, a prophet sent by the Lord, came from Judah to Bethel. He made his way through the multitude, and stood not far from Jeroboam, and cried out with a loud voice, "O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord : Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name ; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee. And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the Lord hath spoken ; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out."

As soon as Jeroboam heard these words he was so incensed that he put forth his hand from the altar and said, " Lay hold on him." " And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him. The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the

Lord." On Jeroboam's beseeching him however, to entreat God in his behalf that his hand might be restored, it was so ; but notwithstanding this miracle, and solemn warning from God, this wicked and idolatrous king kept on in his wickedness and idolatry, sinning grievously himself, and leading his people to sin by his pernicious example.

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## CHAPTER VII.

The prophecy fulfilled.—God has all things under his control.—Other things that Josiah did to destroy idolatry—burned the groves—defiled Tophet—burned the chariots of the sun, and beat down the altars and the images.—Great and difficult things to be done by so young a monarch.—What is moral courage, and importance of it.—Josiah's keeping the passover, and an account of it.—Duty of obeying strictly what God commands with regard to the ordinances and institutions of his worship.—Why Josiah was spared the sight of the great troubles that were to come on Jerusalem and Judah.

What I have just been describing, took place more than three hundred years before Josiah was born. The prophecy that the man of God



uttered, was a remarkable one and exactly fulfilled. Josiah, as we have seen, carried the ashes of the vessels which he caused to be brought out of the temple and burned, to Bethel, that he might render both the place where Jeroboam established his idolatrous worship, and these ashes also, abominable to the people. We read also that "the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burnt the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burnt the grove. And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burnt them on the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the Lord, which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words."

"Then he said, What title is that that I see? And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulchre of the man of God which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel. And he said,



Let him alone ; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria." You can read more about this man of God, and of the cause and manner of his death, in the 13th chapter of the first book of Kings. How entirely God must have every thing under his control, thus to accomplish the prediction which one of his prophets had made three hundred years before. A child was to be born, one of the descendants of David, whose name would be Josiah, and he was to do this strange thing. And so it happened. Josiah, a descendant of David, and the king of Judah, fulfilled the prophecy.

In the same way, God will accomplish all his predictions, and fulfill all his purposes. Nothing takes place so as to disappoint him, and all that he has ordered will certainly come to pass.

We are told also that Josiah put down the idolatrous priests ; and brought out the grove from the house of the Lord, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped it small to powder, and cast the powder upon the graves of those who had worshiped the idols, thus render-

ing the idols and the idolaters abominable in the sight of the people. He brake down, too, the houses of some very wicked persons that were by the house of the Lord. "And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled, (in some way making abominable to the people,) the high places where the priests had burnt incense, from Geba to Beersheba, and brake down the high places of the gates that were in the entering in of the gate of Joshua, the governor of the city."

There was a place called Tophet, a valley not far from Jerusalem, where the idolatrous Israelites established the worship of Moloch, an image and false god of which I have already given you a description.

This place Josiah also defiled, "that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Moloch."

He took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the Lord, and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire. He beat down the idolatrous altars, some of which were in the two

courts of the house of the Lord, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron. "And the high places that were near Jerusalem, where idolatrous worship had been offered, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for the false gods of several of the heathen nations, Josiah also defiled. And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men."

"And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to the children of Israel, and made all that were present in Israel to serve the Lord their God. And all his days they departed not from following the Lord, the God of their fathers."

Think of the great change which this young monarch thus produced throughout his extensive kingdom. He was but a young man when he did it. What resolution and courage he must have had, especially when we consider the number of idolatrous priests, and of great and powerful men, and of wicked people, that must all, have been opposed to the course which he was pursuing, *all in their hearts*, and doubtless a great

many openly in their words and conduct. But they were obliged to yield. Josiah, though a young man, did not fear them. He knew that he had God on his side. He looked to God, and prayed earnestly and often to him for wisdom and strength that he might go forward in the great work of reformation, and you have seen what he accomplished.

And when you have difficulties to encounter in the way of doing your duty, my young friend, do not be disheartened. Your difficulties will, most probably, be vastly less than those of Josiah. But whatever they may be, think of his example. If he was not afraid or discouraged in endeavoring to break up and remove idolatry, and its accompanying abominable wickedness, from a whole kingdom, surely you ought to have resolution enough to contend with the much smaller obstacles that will meet you in your efforts to do good. But remember that your resolution must be derived from devotedness to the service of God, and from a strong faith in his promises to sustain you, and from earnest and constant prayer to him, in the name



of Christ, for wisdom and strength. Be sure that the Lord is on your side, and that you are doing your duty, and then fear not what man can do unto you.

Thus to feel and to act, is to have what is called *moral courage*; a trait of character that is very much needed at the present day, while there is so much prevailing sin to contend with. All need it, the young as well as the old. Josiah, while yet a youth, had a great deal of it; I think as much as, if not more, than any human being of whom the Bible gives us an account. His example, especially in this respect, is well worthy of your imitation, and may the Holy Spirit so influence your heart that you may be disposed and enabled to follow it.

The next public act of Josiah's was to keep a *passover* unto the Lord in Jerusalem. This, you know, was a great feast, or occasion of religious worship and rejoicing, appointed by God to be held every year, in commemoration of the Israelites coming out of Egypt. This name was given to it, because the night before their departure, the destroying angel, who slew all

the first born of the Egyptians, *passed over* the houses of the Hebrews, without injuring any one in them, they being marked with the blood of the lamb, which, for this reason, was called *the Paschal lamb*. The particular manner of keeping the passover, how the lamb was to be chosen, and killed, and eaten, with the other ceremonies, I will not now stop to describe. You can read the account of it in the twelfth chapter of Exodus.

Josiah intended that the passover which was approaching, should be one of great solemnity, that, under the blessing of God, it might serve to show his people still further the great sinfulness of idolatry, by contrasting it with the worship of the true God, and be the means of confirming their obedience to his laws.

He made the necessary arrangements with regard to the priests who were to officiate, "and encouraged them to the service of the house of the Lord."

How happy for a people, when those who are in authority over them, sustain and encourage the ministers of the Gospel and other good

men, in their labors to promote the worship and service of God. Let us all pray that such may be the character of *our rulers* ; that so as a people, both governors and governed, we may be a nation where love and obedience to God shall abound, and his blessings ever be upon us.

Josiah also commanded the Levites to put the ark again into the temple, from which, during the repairs that were made, it had been removed, and to prepare themselves for the solemnities in which they were to be engaged. "So kill the passover," said he, "and sanctify yourselves, and prepare your brethren, that they may do according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses."

That no one, on account of his poverty, might fail of taking a part in this great religious festival, the most ample provision was made for the supply of the passover-offerings. Josiah himself, for this purpose, "gave to the people, of the flock, lambs and kids, to the number of thirty thousand." His princes, too, gave two thousand and six hundred small cattle, and three hundred oxen. The chief of the Levites gave

five thousand small cattle, and five hundred oxen ; the whole being sufficient, as it is estimated, for above four hundred thousand persons, young and old, besides what was given for peace-offerings and other sacrifices.

“And they killed the passover, and the priests sprinkled the blood from their hands, and the Levites flayed them. And they removed the burnt-offerings, that they might give according to the divisions of the families of the people, to offer unto the Lord, as it is written in the book of Moses : and so did they with the oxen. And they roasted the passover with fire, according to the ordinance : but the other holy offerings sod they in pots, and in caldrons, and in pans, and divided them speedily among all the people. And afterwards they made ready for themselves and for the priests : because the priests, the sons of Aaron, were busied in offering of burnt-offerings and the fat until night ; therefore the Levites prepared for themselves, and for the priests, the sons of Aaron.”

The singers, too, were in their place, with their sweet and solemn music, praising the Lord ;



and the porters waited at every gate, so that every thing might be done *decently and in order*.

“So all the service of the Lord was prepared the same day, to keep the passover, and to offer burnt-offerings upon the altar of the Lord, according to the commandment of king Josiah. And the children of Israel that were present, kept the passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days. And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel, from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

See in all this the great reverence which Josiah had for the ordinances of God, and for the religious worship which he had instituted. He observed this great festival, in all its external ceremonies, just as Moses had directed. He made no alterations in it. The time, the manner, the duration of the feast were all in strict accordance with the divine commands. Although he might, doubtless, have induced, or

even ordered the people to celebrate the passover with some additions or alterations, he neither dared nor wished to make any. And so we should be scrupulous in exactly conforming, so far as we can ascertain them, to all the directions of the Word of God, with regard to the ordinances of his house and religious worship. He knows the best mode of doing these things, and it is presumptuous and wicked for us to pretend to be wiser than God.

So pious a man, and so excellent a king was Josiah ; so devoted to the service of God, and so faithful in obeying all his commands, and endeavoring to lead his people to do so ; that the following high approbation of his conduct is given us by God himself, in the inspired account of his reign.

“ And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses ; neither after him arose there any like him.”

And if his people had been like him, what a happy nation they would have been, blessed of

God, and safe and prosperous under his protection. But under the reigns of Manasseh, the grandfather of Josiah, and of Amon, his father, they had been excessively wicked. Vast numbers still continued so, though they conformed outwardly to Josiah's orders to abandon idolatry and worship the true God, and their sinfulness broke out again during the reign of his two sons, who were very wicked men. On account of this, "the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal. And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there."

But Josiah, "because his heart was tender, and he humbled himself before the Lord," as we have seen, was to be spared the sight of the dreadful calamities which, in the just judgment of God, were to be inflicted on his city and nation. This we shall soon see was the case.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Josiah goes out with his army to meet the king of Egypt.—He is mortally wounded in the battle and carried to Jerusalem.—His death.—How he died in peace.—His character.—Concluding exhortation.

After the celebration of the passover by Josiah and his people, Pharaoh-Necho, king of Egypt, was desirous of passing through Judea with his army, in order to carry on war against Charchemish, a city belonging to the king of Babylon, situated upon the banks of the river Euphrates. Josiah, who probably held the northern parts of his kingdom as a grant from the king of Babylon, and was in alliance with him, felt himself bound to protect the city and country of his ally against this foreign enemy. He therefore would not consent to the king of Egypt's passing through his dominions. Pharaoh-Necho sent ambassadors to Josiah, to endeavor to persuade him to give up this opposition, and said that God had commanded him to engage in this war, and that Josiah would be de-



stroyed if he persisted in acting contrary to the will of God.

But Josiah would not yield to his request, or be alarmed at his threatenings. "He hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God."

It is by no means certain that the true God had ever made any communication to the king of Babylon. The word in the Hebrew language, in which the Old Testament was originally written, and which is translated *God*, may mean *gods or idols* ; and learned men have observed, that the expression "*from the mouth of God*," is no where used in the Hebrew Bible, for revelation from the true God ; but that it is always "*from the mouth of the Lord*." Sennacherib, on another occasion, had used similar language to Hezekiah, who paid no regard to it. We can hardly believe that God had commanded Pharaoh-Necho to undertake this expedition, by any of the prophets, and not have given Josiah some information concerning it. The king of Babylon neither produced, nor offered to produce, any proof of his having had such a com-

munication from God, and what reason had Josiah to believe that it had ever been made?

We must not consider him, therefore, as resisting what he knew to be a positive command of God, in his going out to fight with Pharaoh-Necho, and prevent, if possible, his passing through Judea with his army. To have done so, seems to be entirely inconsistent with all his previous character and conduct.

He went in disguise, that he might not be known by the enemy as the king of Judah, and with his army gave battle to the king of Egypt in the valley of Megiddo, which was some considerable distance north of Jerusalem.

During the engagement, while in his chariot, he was shot by the Egyptian archers, and so badly wounded that he was placed in another chariot, with fresh horses, and conveyed directly to Jerusalem, where he soon died. We have every reason to believe that he died in the exercise of a strong faith in God, and in the hope of a happy immortality beyond the grave. He was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers, "*and all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.*"

Thus, after a reign of thirty-one years, died this remarkable and excellent monarch, and thus was fulfilled the promise that was made him, that he should be gathered to his grave in peace, and that his eyes should not see the evil that God would bring upon Jerusalem and the nation. For, although mortally wounded in battle, and suffering probably acute bodily pain, it was no more inconsistent with this mode of death that he should enjoy peace of mind, in his last moments, than if he had died in his bed of some distressing disease. In addition to this, he was gathered to his grave *in peace*, inasmuch as the great troubles in which the nation was soon to be involved had not yet begun. Its external condition was prosperous, and its internal affairs quiet, and, with the exception of the engagement between its army and the king of Egypt, it was at peace with all the world. The scene, indeed, would be soon changed, and distress and dismay come upon it, but Josiah lived not to partake of these judgments of God. He was "gathered to his grave in peace."

The character of Josiah was made up of many

striking and excellent traits. Some of them, my young friend, deserve particular consideration, and while we attend to them, may you be led to understand and value them.

*Josiah began to love and serve God at a very early age.* This, under the blessing of God, laid the foundation of his wise and pious conduct during his whole reign. It prepared himself to resist temptation, as he grew older, and to discharge his duties faithfully and successfully. It drew down upon him the peculiar protection and favor of God, who has made very precious promises to those who early devote themselves to his service.

Josiah was industrious, while young, in improving his mind, and learning what his duties were to be, and how to perform them. We have every reason to think that this was the case, from the ability and success which marked all his efforts to do good, and from the great respect and loyalty which were shown to him by his subjects. Had he been indolent, and inattentive to instruction, his mind could not have had the strength which it exhibited; nor the



judgment and energy which marked his proceedings; nor the wisdom with which he acted in this very difficult station. No great and good mind can be formed without this industry in early life.

Josiah sought very earnestly to know the will of God, *and especially what God would have him to do*. He did this early, and he continued to do it. He felt that this was the most important thing to be known, both by him and his people, and the most important thing to be done when it was known. To live for himself in the enjoyment of luxury and splendor, and to seek his own gratification, wealth, and honor, he knew would be living to no good purpose, would be exceedingly selfish and sinful in itself, and would draw down upon him and his people the displeasure of God. "What, O Lord, wilt thou have me to do?" was his constant inquiry; and being in such a state of mind, he was continually guided by God in the way of duty and of peace. God will always thus guide those who sincerely desire to do his will.

*Josiah's strength was in God, in view of his*

*arduous duties, and especially of his great work in endeavoring to reform an idolatrous and very wicked nation.* It must have been so. His whole character and conduct show that it must have been so. Young as he was, and acting in opposition to the sinful wishes and practices of the vast multitude of his people, among whom were very many of the rich and powerful, of the proud and violent, no other support but his persuasion that the Lord was on his side, and would strengthen and sustain him, could have been sufficient to inspire him with resolution and perseverance. And what may not a good man dare to undertake, when he can say with the apostle Paul, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me?"

*Josiah had a strong abhorrence of sin, and especially of such sins as were then prevailing among his people.* The decided and prompt manner in which he acted in endeavoring to put down idolatry, and to lead the nation to repentance and reformation, shows this. Nothing will ever lead to a thorough and active struggle against sin, both in ourselves and others, but

feeling deeply its odious character in the sight of God, and abhorring it, in some good degree, even as he does. We must see and deplore the evil and guilt of sin, or we shall make very faint efforts to remove it from our own hearts and conduct, and from the hearts and conduct of those around us.

*Josiah was very remarkable for his moral courage.* He was not afraid to let every body know that he was on the Lord's side, and meant to do his will. He was not afraid to show his abhorrence of sin, in his intercourse with others, and in the discharge of his daily duties, nor to reprove sin in others, and to use his authority and influence to remove it. Great difficulties did not deter him from doing this. The extent and long continuance of the wickedness that prevailed among his people ; the power and hatred of those who were engaged in it ; the opposition that he might meet with ; the loss of his popularity ; the laborious and persevering efforts that he must himself make, and the disappointment and disgrace which would attend his failures ; all these shook not the decided purpose

of his soul. He went forward to do his duty, promptly, zealously, and fearlessly. In no other way can any great evils be removed, nor any great reformation be accomplished.

*Josiah took a deep interest in promoting the public worship of God, and obedience to his institutions ; and contributed bountifully from his own wealth to these objects.* Besides destroying idolatry, and restoring the worship of the true God throughout his whole kingdom, you recollect how engaged he was in the work of repairing the temple ; how he called together a vast assembly, while himself and all who were present entered into a solemn covenant to love and obey God ; and how he had the passover celebrated, and contributed very largely, from his own flocks and herds, to enable all to partake in a decent and proper manner of its sacred festivity. God's institutions and ordinances, his holy Sabbath, and the worship and services of his house, are far, far above all the institutions and ordinances of man. If we neglect or slight these, we may do any thing, or every thing else to promote our own temporal and eternal good, and



that of others, but we cannot hope for the blessing of God upon our efforts, and shall be most sadly disappointed.

*Josiah did all that he could to have his people set about the work of reformation immediately.* He set about it himself, as soon as he knew the will of God concerning it. There was no compromise with sin, on his part, or delay in attempting to remove it. And so far as he had authority, he made his people, at least in their outward conduct, cease from all idolatry, and observe the institutions and ordinances of God. Intention to repent at some future time, intention to do that duty, at some future time, which God calls upon us to do now, is but mocking God. It is base hypocrisy. It shows that we still refuse to submit to the authority of God; that we love sin more than him, and hope to escape his terrible displeasure by the frivolous pretext of intending to cease to love it at some future time.

*Josiah loved the Word of God, and was a praying man.* That the former is true, is very evident from the manner in which he regarded

the book of the law of the Lord, when it was found in the temple and brought to him. And that he must have been faithful in the duty of prayer, is also evident from the whole course of his conduct. None but a praying person could have done as he did ; and no other could have been so constantly under the protection and blessing of God. All the good people of whom we read in the Bible, delighted to pray to God, and Josiah must have done so too. *The Bible and prayer—the Bible and prayer*—Let this be our motto. Read, study, love and obey the Word of God. Pray to him, daily and earnestly, in the name of Christ, for the Holy Spirit, to enlighten, guide and sanctify you, and all will go well with you ; you will be blessed of God, as Josiah was, and like him, too, be a blessing to others.

*Josiah used his example and influence, his time and strength, his power and wealth, for the sole purpose of glorifying God, and of doing good to others.* He consecrated himself to this great object. He loved and served God “with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all

his might," as we are told in the Bible. This showed him to be truly a friend of God. For God will not accept a part only of our affection. He claims to be loved supremely, and to be obeyed entirely.

*Josiah, notwithstanding his excellent character, doubtless had many imperfections and sins.* "His heart," we are told, "was tender and he humbled himself before God." And while he mourned for the sins of his people, we have every reason to think that he mourned for his own also. We are not told what his particular sins were. God has not thought it necessary to mention them. But he had internal corruptions, and external temptations, to contend with. Had he been left to himself, he would not have been the good man that he was. He would have wandered from God, and been a great sinner as his people were. It was the Holy Spirit of God that enlightened his mind, and awakened his conscience, and purified his heart, and influenced his will, and led him to hate sin, and to desire, above every thing else, to love and serve God.

Such are some of the most important traits in the character of Josiah. What, my young friend, do you think of this character? Do you admire it? Do you love it?—As we have gone along in the history, have you thought that, had you been in Josiah's place, you would have loved to obey and serve God as he did, and to do good to others?

Although you are not a king, or a queen, yet you ought to have *the spirit* of Josiah. You have duties to perform, and they will become more and more important, every day, as you advance in life. Your influence on those around you will be increasing. You may yet live, nay, you may already have lived, to do a great deal of good, or a great deal of evil. You cannot tell how many children and youth your example may already have affected greatly. It will affect others still more greatly, whatever your condition in life may be.

Perhaps you may live to have very considerable influence, and even power and authority over others. You may be called upon, in the providence of God, to fill important stations. It



may be made known to you, as it was to Josiah, that it is clearly the will of God that you should use your influence, and power, and authority in endeavoring to remove some prevailing sins, in the face of great opposition, and obstacles, and difficulties. And in view of all this, you may have to render a very strict account to God.

Are you beginning to prepare for such duties ? Josiah began when he was quite young. Sin will continue to be in the world. If you desire not to be its slave and its victim, you will have to carry on an incessant struggle against it, both in your own heart and in the hearts of those around you. This struggle may be a very severe one, and demand on your part great faith in God, great wisdom, resolution, perseverance, and moral courage.

Now is the season for you to begin to acquire these traits of character. Neglect to do it, and you may never be like Josiah. The danger of not being like him, will be continually increasing. Temptations will be growing stronger. Sin will establish its power more deeply in your heart. Repentance will become more and more difficult

and improbable, and you may be left of God to go on in the wicked and ruinous ways of your own choosing.

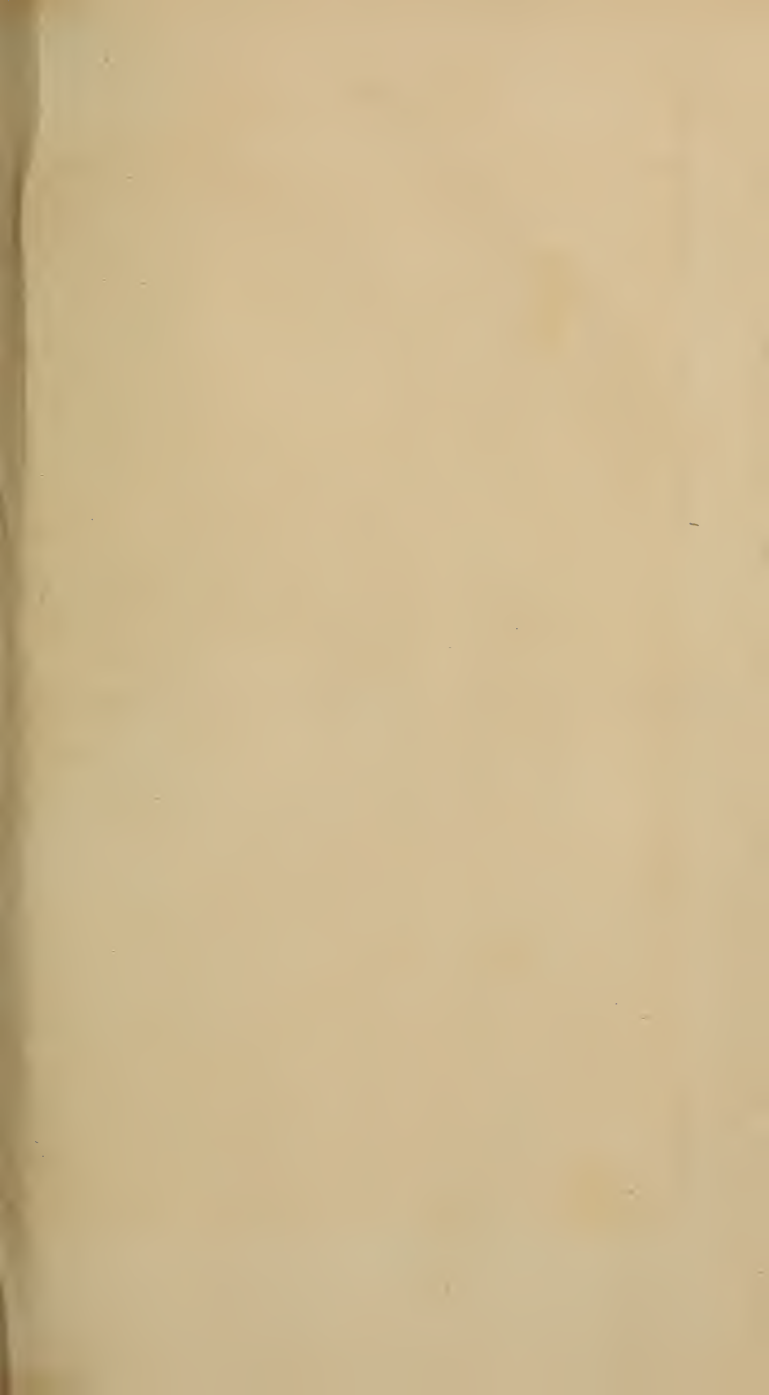
Now, my dear young friend, if you have not already done it, stop and consider the guilt and danger of continuing in sin, of disobeying God, and of disregarding all that he says to you in his Word.

Look to him for his Holy Spirit. Beseech him to shed it down upon you, that you may see and feel the evil of being a sinner. Go to God, as Josiah did, *with a tender heart, and humble yourself before him.* Confess to him your sins. Look to Jesus Christ, who died on the cross that your sins might be forgiven. Beseech God, for Christ's sake, to pardon them; to save you from the power of sin; and to lead you, by his Holy Spirit, to love and serve him while on earth, to delight in doing good to others, and thus to be prepared to enjoy his presence and favor for ever in that world where all will be holiness, and peace, and joy.









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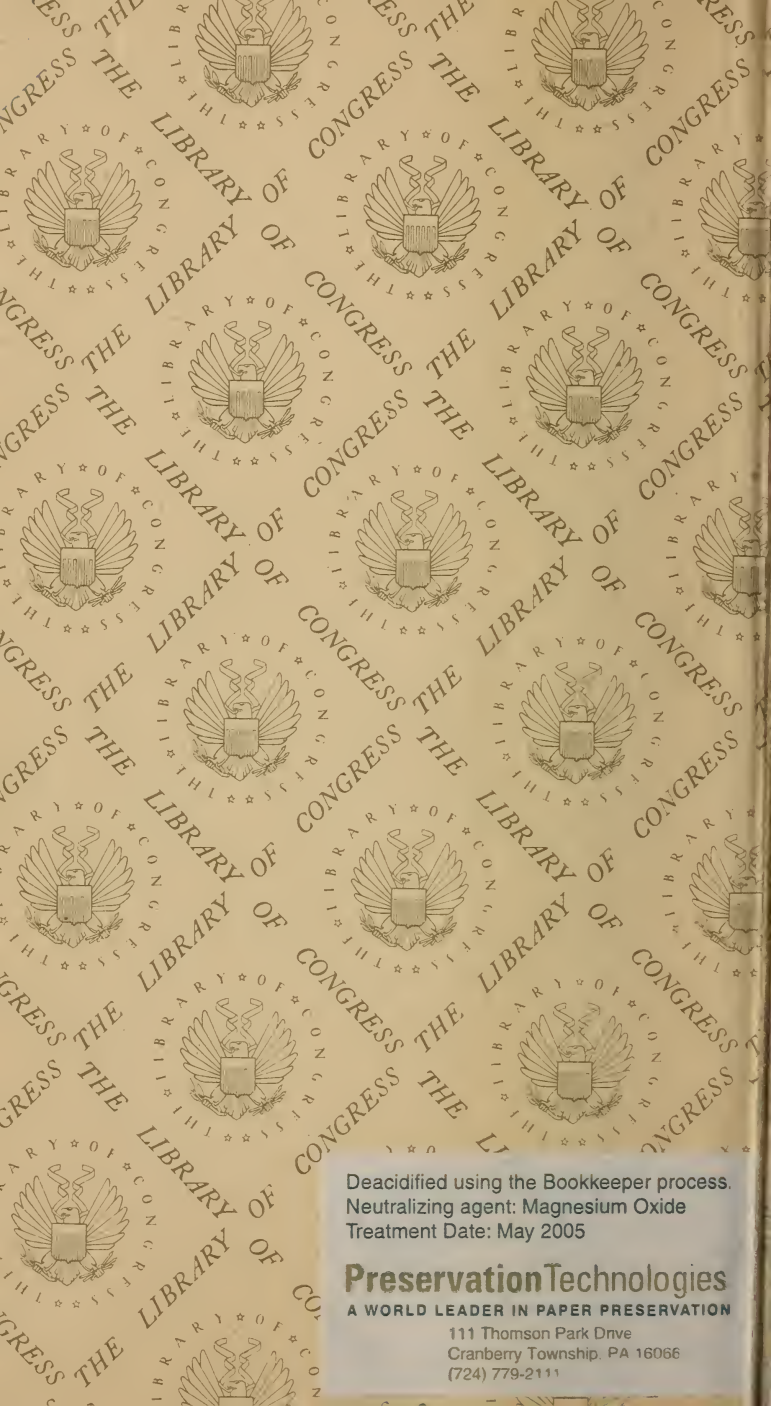






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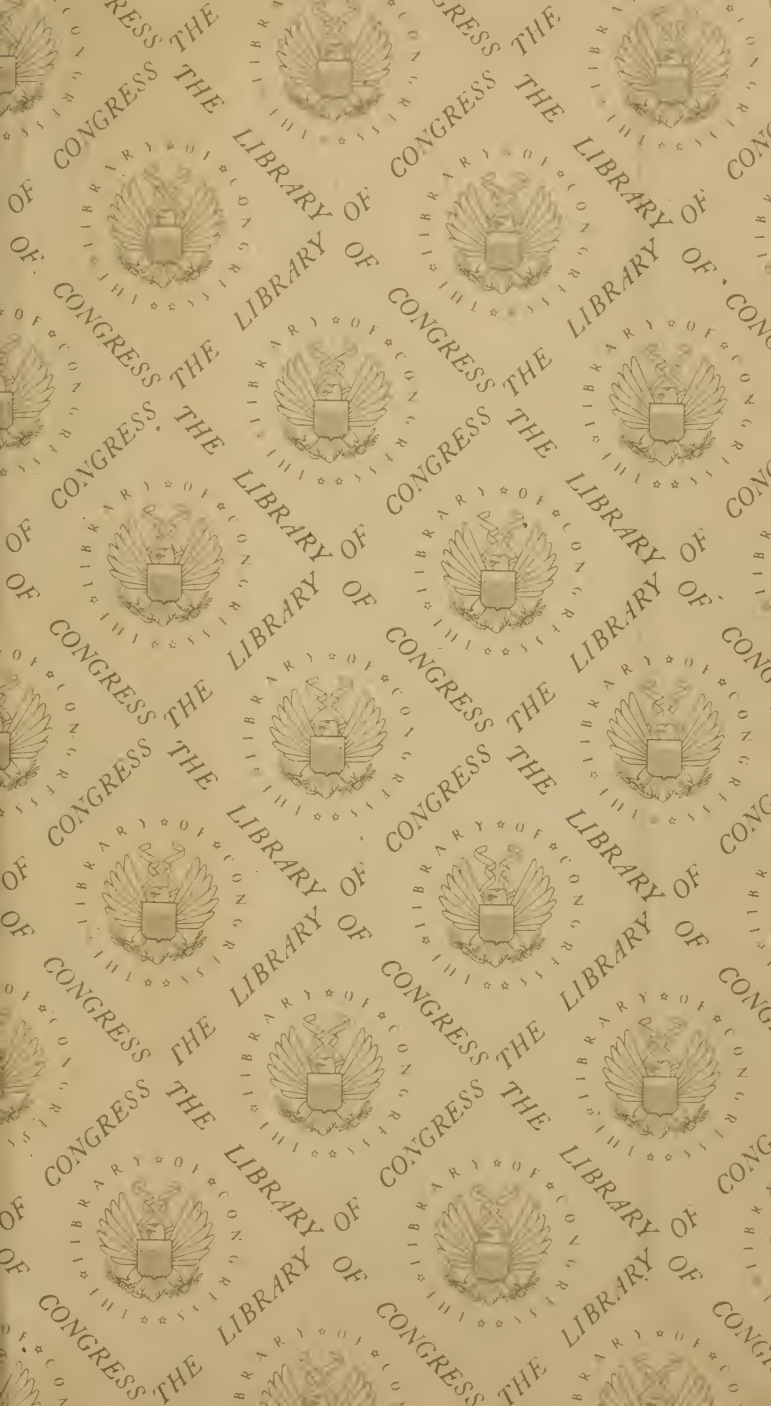


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